

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the following comments and the attachment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claims 8-17 stand withdrawn from consideration as directed to a non-elected species. Claims 1, 6, 7, 18, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0025881 to Miyazaki et al. (herein "Miyazaki"). Claims 2-5 and 20 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were noted as allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Initially, applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of the allowable subject matter of claims 2-5 and 20.

Addressing now the rejection of claims 1, 6, 7, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Miyazaki, that rejection is obviated by the present response.

More particularly, applicants submit that Miyazaki is not a valid reference against the pending claims by virtue of applicants' priority date predating the filing date of Miyazaki.

Miyazaki was filed on July 20, 2001. Japanese priority document 2001-058513, from which the present application claims priority, has a priority filing date of March 2, 2001. That priority date antedates the filing date of Miyazaki, and thereby removes Miyazaki as a valid reference against the pending claims.

Filed with the present response is a certified translation of claimed priority document JP 2001-058513 perfecting applicants' priority date of March 2, 2001. Applicants submit that the provided certified translation of the priority document also fully supports the currently claimed subject matter.

Thereby, by the present response, Miyazaki is removed as a valid reference against the claims and the only outstanding rejection is obviated. Thus, each of Claims 1, 6, 7, 18, and 19 is believed to also be allowable.

With respect to withdrawn claims 8-17, applicants also note that each of withdrawn claims 8-10 and 20 depend from independent claim 1, i.e. independent claim 1 is generic to those withdrawn claims 8-10 and 20, and thus claims 8-10 and 20 must now be reintroduced.

In such ways, applicants respectfully submit that at least each of claims 1-10 and 18-20 is allowable.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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